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ABSTRACT

This final report describes the activities and outcomes of Project Kaleidoscope, a grant funded project designed to develop, field test, and disseminate training materials and methods to prepare personnel to better serve culturally, linguistically and developmentally diverse young children and their families. The project addressed the central roles of families, communities, and culture in child development. Nine modules were developed, integrating the theory and research bases of early education, early childhood special education, multicultural education and bilingual/ESL education. Field testing and dissemination of the modules was carried out in 6 states (Oregon, Minnesota, Florida, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia) over 3 years. A total of 218 administrators, teachers, parents, and paraprofessionals were trained using Kaleidoscope materials. The use of practitioner dilemmas encountered in work with children and families became a central organizing element within the courses/training. Diverse groups of participants analyzed dilemmas for cultural assumptions and applied varied problem solving approaches to identify alternative means to respond. The instructional approach was flexible and based upon individual and/or program-level needs assessment. Participants learned through hands-on, interactive learning activities taken from module content. Additionally, they were encouraged to gather family stories as a support to the development of effective home-school collaboration. Two of the modules (culture and language) were professionally translated into Spanish and used to conduct the 1998 Portland, Oregon, course in Spanish. Ongoing efforts of the project are aimed at a wider dissemination of the modules. (SG)

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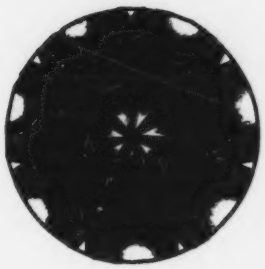
Final Report



PROJECT KALEIDOSCOPE

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1996-2000
Grant #H029K60032

Submitted by

George Mason University
Graduate School of Education
Helen A. Kellar Institute for Human disAbilities

January 18, 2001

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Final Report

Project Kaleidoscope

Providing new ways of thinking, learning, and responding for personnel working with culturally, linguistically and ability diverse young children and their families.

Executive Summary

The overall goal of Project Kaleidoscope (originally funded under the name UTEM-2: Unified Teacher Enhancement Model) was to develop, field test, and disseminate training materials and methods to prepare personnel to better serve culturally, linguistically and developmentally diverse young children and their families. Traditionally, early intervention and education personnel have received little formal preparation to work with children and families from diverse cultures. Therefore, the modules addressed the central roles of families, communities, and culture in child development. The nine Kaleidoscope training modules and related activities integrated the theory and research bases of early education, early childhood special education, multicultural education and bilingual/ESL education, and are contained in Appendix A.

More than 200 inservice personnel were trained with Kaleidoscope modules. Field testing and dissemination of the modules was carried out in six states (Oregon, Minnesota, Florida, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia) over three years. The project developed a unique strategy: meaningful dilemmas. The use of practitioner dilemmas encountered in work with children and families supported self examination, reflection and change. Diverse groups of participants analyzed dilemmas for cultural assumptions and applied varied problem solving approaches to identify alternate means to respond to dilemmas.

Project Kaleidoscope training participants learned through the delivery of a unified and flexible instructional approach, based upon individual and/or program-level needs assessments. Participants learned through hands-on, interactive learning activities taken from module content. The training incorporated multiple opportunities for reflective thinking and dialogue. The training approach made use of participants' personal and professional stories, in order to link module content with personal experience. Finally, the training approach encouraged the gathering of family stories as a support to the development of effective home-school collaboration. Training activities, handouts and overheads are included in Appendix B. Evaluation comments from participants on numerous occasions were extremely positive.

Due to staff changes, a no-cost extension for the project was received during the third year of the project; therefore, this Final Report covers the period 10/1/96 - 9/30/00. Several significant project highlights are identified below.

Name Change

Following the Community Advisory Group meeting of February 27, 1998, project staff felt that the original project name (UTEM-2: Unified Teacher Enhancement Model) did not adequately convey the nature of the project, and, in fact, stood in the way of effective dissemination. Therefore, after careful consideration of the options presented at the Community Advisory Group meeting, the project was re-named *Kaleidoscope* to convey the integrated and interconnected nature of the modules' content.

Personnel Change

The original project coordinator, Clara Cappiello, departed in December of 1998 to become the Training Manager of the East Coast Migrant Head Start Project. In July of 1999, Mr. Robert Stechuk (see vitae, Appendix C) was hired for the position. Mr. Stechuk was familiar with the project since its inception and had served on the project's Community Advisory Group; therefore he was able to make a smooth and efficient transition into the position.

New Module

The no-cost extension enabled project staff to integrate field test results into the design and content of the modules and materials. The extension also allowed for the creation and development of a ninth module, *"The Power of Stories,"* which serves as a logical summary and point of closure for the original eight modules.

Extensive Field Testing & Dissemination

Project staff accomplished a field testing and dissemination process that was far more extensive than that proposed in our original grant. This process was carried out in five different states over the period 1998 - 2000. A total of 222 inservice personnel were trained using materials and methods from the project. Feedback from the field test and dissemination events were crucial to the on-going revision of the materials. A complete presentation of field test and dissemination efforts is provided on pages 7 - 9.

Emergence of Key Instructional Strategies

We have found that several of our instructional strategies are especially powerful. We have refined and clarified these to enhance replicability.

During the field testing and dissemination phases of the project, we identified and recorded the benefits of four instructional strategies. In repeated training sessions, we discovered that emphasizing culture as a lens, using personal stories in training contexts; exploring participants' meaningful dilemmas; and journal keeping were both individually and collectively effective in supporting participants' learning of the material and in their implementation of the material in their

professional settings. A more detailed discussion of these strategies is presented along with other information related to Objective 1.1 on pages 5 - 6.

Project Status

The project had two broad goals. Specific accomplishments related to each objective are presented below.

Goal 1: Develop training materials to enhance the capacity of early intervention and early childhood personnel to serve culturally, linguistically and developmentally diverse young children and their families in inclusive schools and community settings.

Objective 1.1: Design eight training modules integrating theories and strategies from the disciplines of early education, early childhood special education, multicultural education and bilingual/ESL education.

The field testing, and especially the dissemination of Kaleidoscope modules via courses offered for academic credit, validated our initial premise: there is a tremendous *need* for written training materials that reflect an integrated approach to understanding child development. In conducting individual self-assessments, program assessments and through small- and large-group discussions held during training/courses, it is clear that many personnel working with diverse young children have had little or no training in these issues. In addition, may staff report frustration in searching for information but being unable to locate much, if anything.

Since field testing began in Year Two, participants' comments regarding Kaleidoscope materials were consistently positive (see Appendices D, I & J for evaluation comments). For example, one year after project staff provided training to Migrant Head Start staff in Oregon, program administrators maintained communication with us regarding the on-going positive influences of the project on their program (see Appendix D). The program has continued to discuss their professional development issues with us, and has expressed interest in receiving further courses based on the modules.

Two discrete aspects of the Kaleidoscope approach have contributed to personnel development for diverse young learners: a) print materials development; and b) use of specific, targeted instructional strategies to promote reflection.

Print Materials

The design and development of the nine Kaleidoscope modules followed a continuous process of reflection and revision. Module text and sample training activities, handouts and overheads are attached. During the design and development of the modules, project staff validated these materials through the analysis of participants' evaluations, through the conduct of focus groups, and through input from our Community Advisory Group.

This process resulted in an extensive compilation of print materials which integrate four academic disciplines: early childhood education, early childhood special education, multicultural education and bilingual/ESL education. The modules can be used to train preservice or inservice personnel. In addition, the modules can be used to train groups containing personnel from various professional levels, such as those that include experienced teachers, assistants or paraeducators, and bus drivers. We have also conducted a number of Kaleidoscope courses that included parents as well as teachers.

During the period of no-cost extension, project staff decided to create an additional module (*The Power of Stories*) to serve as a culmination or point of closure for training participants. During this period we also added several Appendices to the Culture module, to better respond to the expressed needs of training participants. The Appendices include:

- a handout containing twelve different definitions of culture, so that training participants can both compare the various types of and approaches to the definitions, and work on the development of their own definition of "culture";

- a sample problem-solving activity, based upon examples taken from the literature, so that training participants can practice and reflect on problem-solving approaches and skills using their knowledge of culture as a lens; and

- additional activities, handouts and overheads regarding relevant aspects of culture, to support participants' application of the information to their daily professional practices.

The role of family and culture in child development is complex, and we as project staff continued to gain insights into the intricate ways that culture, family and community influence the development of diverse children during the entire grant period. Thus, we saw the need to regularly review and revise the modules' text and training activities. Further, we saw the need to incorporate dimensions of culture in **all** of our training, rather than isolate discussions of culture to the Culture module. It is our goal that participants come to see culture as the lens through which all personal and professional behaviors are filtered.

One finding we obtained from our process of continuous review and revision was that one piece of information might need to be presented in different forms, and at different times, to support

practitioner's acceptance and implementation of the information. That is, rather than presenting a single definition of "culture" at the beginning of a module, we have found it more effective to deal with the issue of defining culture in multiple modes. Therefore, we presented definitions of culture based upon a review of many sources. In addition, we included a handout of twelve definitions of culture as a training activity in the module's Appendix. In this way, practitioners are able to review the variety of definitions and approaches used by scholars. Finally, our training methods provide time during the training session/course for participants to ponder their own, personal definition of culture. This gives participants the opportunity for reflection, self-discovery and personal meaning-making.

Module Translation

In 1998, through a partnership with the Academy for Educational Development in Washington, DC, two of the modules (Culture, Language) were professionally translated into Spanish at no cost to the project. The translation enabled the October, 1998 course in Portland, Oregon to be conducted in Spanish by project staff. This effort enabled project staff to conduct a wider range of dissemination of the modules, and also broadened the diversity of groups participating in the training. The translation of the Culture module is included in Appendix E and the translation of the Language module in Appendix F.

Instructional Strategies

As we moved from the initial module design phase to field testing and dissemination, we discovered that several strategies which are an integral part of our own preservice program were both unique and highly effective in contributing to participants' learning. For example, participants mentioned to us that they had previously attended training on "cultural diversity" but were left unsure how - if at all - to apply this information in their professional settings. We discovered that, in particular, four instructional strategies were unique to our project, that is, that they were outside of the experiences of our audiences. These strategies are noted below:

1) A focus on culture as the lens through which all experience is viewed.

Our belief in the centrality of culture in the lives of families and practitioners impacted the overall development of the nine modules. Viewing culture as the lens through which we interpret all actions and behaviors required the integration of training activities that encouraged participants to reflect on their own cultural background, to help them better understand families different from their own. All training activities, in some way, asked participants to consider the role that their cultural lens plays in informing their judgements and practices.

2) The use of personal stories in professional development contexts.

During the field test and dissemination phases of the project we re-affirmed our commitment to the use of personal stories in professional development contexts. We found that personal stories allow practitioners to link theory with their own daily practices. In addition, we were delighted over and over again with the responses we received to this strategy. Not only does the use of personal stories in training contexts create supportive, engaging and interactive sessions, but many of the programs we worked with emphasized *their* desire to adopt this strategy in their own training events.

3) The exploration of participants' meaningful dilemmas.

The exploration of participants' meaningful dilemmas proved to be another effective strategy for creating interactive training sessions. We use the term "meaningful dilemma" to refer to problems or situations that training participants identify as important to them. During the field test and dissemination phases of the project, we found that meaningful dilemmas could be integrated into training in many ways: as an opening activity, as an introduction to training about problem-solving strategies, or as a closing activity. Regardless of when the strategy was implemented, we found that meaningful dilemmas were effective in gaining and sustaining participants' attention and interest, in linking module text to the to daily practices, and in providing examples of successful problem solving strategies. Above all, meaningful dilemmas enabled practitioners to gain new understandings of how their own culture influences their work with children and families, and how the cultures of families contributes to their child care and education practices.

4) Journal Keeping.

Since the influence of culture on child development is so complex, practitioners must not only learn relevant information but also organize the information in ways that are useful and practical. Practitioners must maintain skills previously learned as they undertake to acquire new skills. We learned that journal keeping enables training participants to express their own interests, ideas, questions, and concerns - and to pursue additional information about these.

For these reasons, journal keeping proved to be another effective training strategy. Through the use of a personal journal, practitioners can reflect on their practices, their own culture and the cultures of the children and families they work with. We found that this strategy facilitates collaboration among practitioners and between practitioners and families.

Objective 1.2: Design interactive multimedia in CD ROM format to complement training materials and provide a vehicle for reflective problem solving by early childhood personnel.

A CD ROM prototype was developed and included the nine modules, training activities and handouts, bibliographies and trainer's tips (see Appendix 0). Further, project staff remain

committed to the fullest uses of technology to support the on-going dissemination of Kaleidoscope materials.

When the grant was written in 1995, it was believed that the development of a CD ROM would provide a vehicle for interactive instruction and reflective problem solving by participants. However, as field testing proceeded through Year Two and Year Three, it was found that interactive instruction could be effectively accomplished without the use of a CD ROM. For example, we found that participants can easily identify and discuss numerous meaningful dilemmas related to their professional practices. These meaningful dilemmas, in fact, have become a central organizing element within Kaleidoscope courses/training. Therefore, the value of "capturing" and presenting dilemmas via CD ROM was minimized. In addition, the use of other training techniques, including journaling and small group discussions have enabled project staff to deliver training that is highly interactive and supportive of reflection. Finally, many of our training have included parents as well as professionals (e.g. Oregon and Minnesota Migrant Head Start). The diverse groups of participants that we have worked with are a natural source for the exploration of meaningful dilemmas and the practice of reflective problem solving strategies.

Therefore, during the period of no-cost extension, the program began the process of developing an on-line (internet-based) course using Kaleidoscope materials. George Mason University's Information Technology Coordinator provided support to enable project staff to put course materials on the Internet via Blackboard 5, a comprehensive and flexible e-learning software platform available to George Mason University faculty (see Appendix G).

At this point, we firmly believe that Internet-based dissemination is the most effective way of reaching ever-larger numbers of practitioners. Given the strong and continuing interests of the Minnesota and Oregon Migrant Head Start programs to receive additional Kaleidoscope courses, our on-going dissemination efforts are aimed at initiating the delivery of the material through various means, including distance learning.

Goals 2: Design and field test a flexible instructional delivery model to ensure access to training for a wide range of professional and paraprofessional, preservice and inservice personnel.

Objective 2.1: Design self assessment instruments to assist individuals and programs in analyzing current knowledge and skills related to inclusive culturally responsive practices.

A self-assessment instrument was designed during the first year of the grant (see Appendix H).

During the final two years of the project, assessments became an important part of the delivery of Kaleidoscope courses/training. For example, the Minnesota program contacted project staff in April of 2000 to request courses for their personnel. The program conducted the self assessment

during the summer (July - August). In addition, copies of the Culture module were distributed to participants for them to read - and review in writing - in advance of the course. This information assisted in the design of the course to meet the specific needs of the participants. Finally, upon arrival in Minnesota, an initial activity was conducted to verify participants' priorities. Each of these procedures enabled course content to meet the needs of participants, as is reflected in the evaluation comments received following the course. For example, one participant wrote: "I gained knowledge about myself, my students and how everyone's lens really reflect their lives. My attitudes changed about ways to observe culture - just asking cut and dry interview questions isn't enough."

Objective 2.2: Field test training modules with inservice paraprofessional and professional personnel.

Through a systematic formative evaluation process, field testing of the nine modules contributed to the overall quality of the training materials. The following activities demonstrate the cyclical development, field testing and revision process used to design all the modules.

Initial Field Testing

Date: Spring semester, 1998
Site: Higher Horizons Head Start, Falls Church, VA
Course Title: *Working with Diverse Children and Families*
Number of Credits: 1
Number of Students: 18 (18 undergraduate)
Modules used: Culture, Inclusion
Design/Development Stage: field testing of Culture and Inclusion modules.

Kaleidoscope Courses

Based upon the success of field testing, and following presentations to the Migrant Head Start community, project staff planned, organized and delivered courses for academic credit based upon the Kaleidoscope modules as follows:

Date: July 13-15 & October 1 - 3, 1998
Site: Minnesota Migrant Head Start, Faribault, MN
Course Title: *Developmentally Appropriate Programs & Practices for Children Ages 3 - 5*
Number of Credits: 3
Number of Students: 22 (17 undergraduate; 5 graduate)
Modules used: Culture, Language; Developmentally Appropriate Practices
Design/Development Stage: refine text and activities of the Culture module; field test Language and Developmentally Appropriate Practices modules.

Date: November 16 - 19, 2000
Site: Minnesota Migrant Head Start, Willmar, MN
Course Title: *"Culturally and Developmentally Responsive Practices for Children Birth Through Age Eight"*
Number of Credits: 2
Number of Students: 14 (9 undergraduate; 5 graduate)
Modules used: Culture; Developmentally Appropriate Practices; Stories; Development
Design/Development Stage: continued refinement of Culture module to include problem solving (cultural conflict) activity; refinement of Developmentally Appropriate Practices and Stories modules, field testing of Development module. The course syllabus and participant evaluations of the course are contained in Appendix J).

The total number of inservice personnel trained using Kaleidoscope materials was 218. The inservice training included persons from various positions/levels, including administrators, teachers, parents, and paraprofessionals.

Objective 2.3: Field test training modules with selected preservice programs in early education and early intervention.

Date: December 9, 1999
Site: George Mason University
Course Title: Universality and Diversity in Child and Family Development
Number of Credits: N/A
Number of Students: 16 (16 graduate)
Module used: Culture
Design/Development Stage: present module text and sample activities to graduate-level preservice personnel for review and feedback.

Selections of the Culture module were presented to members of a preservice cohort at George Mason University. Students participated in several in-class activities based upon the text of the Culture module. They were also involved in sharing stories of their internship experiences with each other. In both verbal and written feedback, students expressed strong support for the module's content and for the organization of the activities. Students also expressed surprise at how much they learned from telling their own internship story and in listening to those of others.

Objective 2.4: Develop trainer's guide to accompany training materials.

Kaleidoscope module text functions as a guide for trainers in local programs. The developed activities, handouts and overheads are used to assist participants to learn and to be able to implement the information presented. Throughout field testing and dissemination, we encouraged local programs to reflect on their own priorities and to develop training approaches

that are most effective for their own communities.

The Kaleidoscope modules are **not** intended to be a prescriptive curriculum, in which replication is done by rote. Instead, the materials have been packaged both to address the depth and breadth of topical information well as to be as flexible and adaptable as possible. Ultimately, our goal is to provide programs with an effective foundation for understanding the ways in which cultural lenses affect work with young children and families, and that the materials provide enough resources and strategies for programs to use as part of a long-term approach to professional development.

Objective 2.5: Disseminate training models and materials.

Dissemination activities since the second year of the grant have included the following presentations, ranging in length from one hour to a full day:

- Higher Horizons Head Start Center, Falls Church, VA December 13, 1999
- NEC*TAS National Meeting, Washington, DC, January 30 - February 2 , 2000
- United Cerebral Palsy Early Head Start, Alexandria, VA February 22, 2000 and September 28, 2000
- Migrant Head Start National Conference, Arlington, VA, 1997 - 2000
- Cultural Diversity Advisory Committee of the Virginia State Legislature, Charlotte, VA March 6, 1999 and April 13 - 14, 2000
- National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, National Meeting, Washington, DC, August 25, 2000
- Institutions of Higher Education, Early Childhood Committee Meeting, Richmond VA, March 16, 1999 and September 18, 2000
- Prince William Public Schools Child Find In-Service, Dale City, VA November 2, 1999
- Maryland Department of Education Child Find, Columbia, MD, September 15, 2000

Dissemination has also been accomplished through phone and/or email exchanges with:

- Head Start Region VI Disabilities Services Quality Improvement Center
- Oregon Child Development Coalition, Portland OR

- Fairfax County Office for Children, Farifax, VA
- Gum Springs Head Start Child Development Center, Alexandria VA
- Higher Horizons Head Start Center, Falls Church, VA
- United Way of Connecticut, Rocky Hill, CT

To support our on-going dissemination efforts, project staff have developed a color brochure (see Appendix K) and actively maintain a website (see Appendix L). The website is updated regularly to indicate when and where project staff will be presenting through a "Look for us at:" heading. In addition, through our partnership with the Academy for Educational Development's Migrant Head Start Quality Improvement Center, information on Project Kaleidoscope is maintained and disseminated through their website as well (see Appendix M).

Budget Information

During the period 10/1/96 - 9/30/00 all allocated federal funds were spent (total = $437,034.00) and $156,648.00 in non-federal share was contributed to the project. Until 1999, the budget was slightly underspent due to the time needed to hire the original project coordinator. However, by 9/30/00 all federal funds had been spent. During the period of no-cost extension, not all budgeted funds for travel, CD ROM production or for the hiring of graduate assistants was spent. The reasons for these budget modifications were: 1) some travel costs were picked up by programs that we worked with; 2) CD ROM production was accomplished at no cost to the project thanks to the donation of services and equipment by GMU; and 3) in place of graduate assistants, a full-time project coordinator with expertise in design, delivery and dissemination of training was hired.

Supplemental Information

What We Learned

As we reflect back over the four years of the project, our understanding of has developed along the following lines:

- the use of personal narratives or stories from the experiences of both families and practitioners is a powerful training strategy;
- there is a great need for material and training that encourages practitioners working with culturally, linguistically, and developmentally diverse children and their families to be pro-active and reflective;

- there are real and powerful benefits to inclusive training involving families, administrators, educators, and paraprofessionals as one group in a shared activity;
- training materials and methods that promote examining our own cultural lens are essential;
- more translations of the modules are necessary; and
- distance learning is a viable alternative/outreach approach to dissemination.

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